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K. Engstrom



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M D C C L X X V I I .

LETTER

DR. P. R. D. C.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

NATURE VALUE



CIVIL SERVICE

LONDON
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LETTER

TO

DR. PRICE.

SIR,

FROM the character you have long borne, of being remarkable for the closeness of your reasoning, and your mathematical abilities, I expected in your last performance, however your first principles might have been contrary to my own ideas of right and wrong, to have found you arguing

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consistently with those principles, and not contradicting yourself perpetually; not deducing false conclusions from the propositions you had established, and quitting in every paragraph the certainty of logical precision, for the fallacious coloring of empty declamation.

In your introduction, you apologize for giving, in your observations, so gloomy a representation of the state of the kingdom, by saying, the evidence of its unhappy situation is to *you* irresistible; though at the same time you say, it appears otherwise to those whose integrity you cannot question, and submit the decision to the public. This is modest.—But in the paragraph immediately preceding it, you tell us, the American war must shock the feelings and reason of every considerate person; and then run on with distinctions between external and internal coercion, which are entirely foreign to the purpose, and which you must know, however you may wish to disguise

disguise your sentiments, are quite inconsistent with that enlarged morality, which is, from necessity, unhappily established as the rule of political conduct, and which is distinguished by the name of the Law of Nations. Would your favorite Americans make the distinction? Would they, were any one province to chuse, in consequence of that freedom which you tell us is inherent in every society, to put itself again under the protection of Great Britain? Would the Americans *attend to the distinction* you have intimated, or would they not rather try to maintain by fire and sword, dominion over the persons and property of a people out of their realm, and who have no share in their legislature?

Before I consider your definition of that slavery, which consists in one state being under the coercion of another, it will be necessary for me to mention what my idea is of the dependence of America on Great Britain. I look on the Americans entirely as subjects
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of Great Britain, in every respect whatever, and entitled to every privilege, and every immunity in common, with the inhabitants of these islands. They are not a conquered people, with certain privileges granted them and their country, they are Britons, who have, for their own private advantage and conveniency, migrated to a distant region, under the protection of the British Government, and subject to such regulations as were specified in the patents they obtained from that government, at their migration.

It was their own free choice that led them to exchange (for some imagined or proposed conveniency, no doubt) the full exercise of their legislative privileges, which they enjoyed at home, for the same protection, but an inferior power, in a distant country—a necessary distinction, which he who will not see, must be absurd enough to suppose different states joined to each other, without any common tie—or wicked

wicked enough to desire to sacrifice the only constitution where personal freedom was ever really enjoyed, to the Utopian scheme of founding a fifth Empire on the other side the Atlantic. The same free-will that directed the settlers in America to prefer opulence and protection at a distance, to power and poverty in England, may, when ever it is so inclined, bring them back to their mother country, where their ambition and their patriotism may be satisfied by reassuming their ancient rights, and they may have an opportunity of shewing their consequence in the legislature of the empire, by the purchase of a small tenement in a Cornish borough.

This, I confess, is the notion I have always formed of the dependence of our Colonies on the *Metropolis*, (to use an expression of your favorite writers); and can see nothing at all in this situation resembling the dreadful accounts we read in history of the miserable state of conquered

ed provinces dependent on free states; a similitude that exists only in the imaginations of distempered enthusiasts, and in the specious assertions of artful men, who have inflamed those imaginations, and blown the coals of a civil war, the infamy of which they would endeavour to fix on a respectable nation, devoted by their infernal wishes, to ruin and destruction.

In your account of this *cruel* subordination; you, as usual, forget the principles you set out with, and totally contradict your own assertions. You tell us, *the free subject of a free state is a contradiction in terms*; that consequently the dependence of America on Britain must bring with it every species of slavery, of which human nature is unhappily capable, and yet these more than Roman Patriots, the virtuous inhabitants of America, were so fond of this worse than Egyptian bondage, that you inform us by the authority of anonymous, and consequently authentic letters
from

from New York, and the glorious resolution of a committee of the Congress, that they had nothing more at heart than the continuing dependent on their mother country.

Your eight proofs of the tendency of our constitution to monarchy, I shall not take on me now to examine; there is much common place argument mixed with some serious truths, which are not the less real for being trite. Prejudice itself cannot deny our encreasing luxury and dissipation, the sure forerunners of corruption and slavery; but I cannot see how our present breach with America will hurry on that crisis; or how we should prove ourselves less corrupted, by suffering so large a part of our dominions to declare themselves independent of our Legislature; or how it will be a check on the power of the Crown, to let so extensive a territory continue dependant on the King, and not on the Parliament of Great Britain: for the
having

having one common sovereign seems the only band these assertors of freedom resolve shall unite them to this unfortunate nation,

A circumstance like this must strike any writer, really a friend to our constitution, who is not blinded by passion, or warped by prejudice, as the most fatal stroke that could be inflicted on us. It is an observation of some French writer, that the noblest government in the world was on the brink of ruin, when the discovery of South America was offered by Columbus to Henry the Seventh: Dr. Price would equally involve it in destruction, by offering the Empire of North America to George the Third. The mines of Mexico and Peru would not put our king more above the pecuniary aid of his Parliament, than the trade, the produce, and the eager grants of the North American Continent, zealous to shew its attachment to their Prince, and induce him to leave the narrow circumscribed bounds of a small island, for the pleasure

pleasure of gaining an immense dominion;
and acquiring the flattering title of EMPE-
ROR OF AMERICA.

You tell us you have been much mis-
understood on the subject of freedom. On
the contrary, you have been clearly un-
derstood: it is impossible for any rational
being who reads your former observations,
as well as these additional ones, not to see
plainly your entire aversion to our excellent
constitution: it is clear you wish to see
democracy and presbytery raised on the ruins
of our present establishment in church
and state. These are sentiments that
breathe in every line of all your producti-
ons: and, this being the case, it is im-
possible *your declarations of preferring such
a constitution as our own, however often re-
peated, can have any force: you will still
be considered as an advocate for a pure de-
mocracy.* Tho' I trust and hope that our
Peers and Commons retain some of the
obstinacy of their ancestors, that they will

be as deaf to the persuasions of a Calvinist, as they formerly were to those of a Pope, and continue with the Gothic spirit of our ancient Barons to answer, *una voce*,
 NOLUMUS LEGES ANGLIÆ MUTARI QUÆ
 HUCUSQUÆ USITATÆ ET ADPROBATÆ
 SUNT.

In all writings on government which have ever fallen into my hands, one only excepted, (I mean the pamphlet lately published, entitled *a Fragment on Government*) there seems to be a total fear of expressing sentiments that are not supported by prior authority, and the old absurd abettors of absolute monarchy could not be more attached to their patriarchal authority, and *jus divinum*, than their modern antagonists are to the name of Locke and the original compact. The first governments were *really* founded on *fraud* or *force*; the only *right* to such foundation is *public utility*: happy that people who have been able to shake off the shackles of the *former*, and
 establish

establish the *latter* as far as is consistent with the errors incident to every human institution. But speculative writers, influenced by opinions of other men, (however respectable their authority) who will form systems of government, on the absurd supposition, that mankind in some distant age, tired with the inconveniencies attending a state of nature, assembled on a large plain, and made a formal surrender of their natural liberty on certain conditions, then expressly entered into and solemnly confirmed: such writers, I say, when they come to treat on the real state of the polity of nations, tho' they may form chimerical schemes for the management of imaginary republics, will ever find their theories unsuited to the regulation of any civil society, and absolutely incapable of ever being carried into execution.

I cannot quit this subject without remarking the frequent use you have made of the Abbe Raynal's book—a book which has
had

had a surprising circulation in all parts of Europe, as a companion at the idle hours of the toilet of the luxurious and ignorant, but which a man of your penetration and knowledge, were they not both obscured by the mists of prejudice thrown over them, by his favourable accounts of your American arch-patriots, must have despised as a romantic composition, calculated at once to amuse and mislead, destitute of truth and real information, a motley mixture of infidelity and credulity, of affectation, error and conceit.

Thus much, Sir, I have thought it proper to say concerning your late performance, that your readers may have at least a ready antidote to the poisonous principles you endeavour to instill. A more full confutation I trust, will in time appear from the masterly hand that has so amply corrected your former errors; and that part of your work which tries to throw such a horrid

horrid light on our finances, will I hope be shown equally destitute of truth and precision with your former attempt on the same subject. I have only to add, that I hope nothing like personal invective has escaped me in the foregoing pages; it is what I would ever wish to avoid, tho' it is difficult to suppress the warm effusions of honest indignation, when under the sacred pretence of patriotism, we see our country exposed to the insults of her foreign and domestic enemies—when we see her represented as sinking under an accumulated load of internal misfortunes, while her external foes are invited to encrease her perplexities, and compleat her ruin.

That the fatal picture you have drawn of our situation may meet with the sovereign contempt it deserves, both at home and abroad; and that an honest and vigorous ministry may be unanimously seconded by a brave and provoked people, in their spirited exertions in favour of their just rights, till the

the votaries of faction and rebellion return
to their duty, must be the sincere wish of
every real friend to constitutional liberty,
and among the rest of,

Sir,

Your humble Servant,

An ENGLISHMAN.

